STATEMENT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE 18th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY

The New People's Army observes its eighteenth anniversary on March 29 this year amid fresh savage challenges from fascist and other reactionary forces, and amid excellent opportunities for a major leap in our people's war, within the next few years.

Since its establishment by the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1969 the people's army has confronted the fiercest armed onslaughts of the reactionary puppet-state, borne the heaviest sacrifices, and won and preserved major victories in the course of fighting for the national and democratic interests of the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants. All these have confirmed the lessons that revolutionary armed struggle is the most effective and viable means for achieving basic changes in the economic, social and political life of the people.

Over those years, the people's army has grown many hundred times bigger throughout the archipelago than its initial strength of only a relatively few guerilla fighters operating in only a small portion of the country.

The New People's Army has been steeled into what it is today – a truly national revolutionary army emplaced in almost all strategic areas of the country, with a generally excellent corps of officers and mean, enjoying broad and strong support from the people. Notwithstanding certain problems and temporary setbacks in some areas, the people's army is continuously consolidating and expanding its guerilla bases and zones, enlarging and strengthening its fighting units, inflicting more and bigger blows on the enemy, and chalking up increasing significant gains for the people's democratic revolutions

In the current period, as the economic and political crisis of the reactionary ruling system worsens even more and the US-Aquino regime escalates its counterrevolutionary war, the people's army is facing bigger challenges than ever bore. But as before, the New People's Army will overcome all difficulties as it continues to bend every effort to strengthen itself ideologically, politically, militarily and organizationally keep the closest links with the people; and boldly advance the people's war towards eventual victory.

COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY WAR OF THE US-AQUINO REGIME

Philippine society under the US-Aquino regime remains essentially the same as it was during the rule of the deposed Marcos fascist puppet dictatorship. It is semicolonial and semifeudal, with the broad masses of the people exploited and oppressed by US imperialism and the local ruling classes of big compradors and big landlords.

As its long-standing monopoly of power and open terrorist rule could no longer effectively serve but instead became more detrimental to the interest of the entire reactionary ruling system, the Marcos fascist autocracy was removed from power by US imperialism and majority of the local reactionary classes, riding on the crest of a-massive antifascist popular uprising. In its stead, a new form of comprador-landlord rule with a liberal facade has been steadily and increasingly consolidated to make more effective the intensification of foreign and feudal exploitation and oppression and of "counter-insurgency" in the country.

The popularity of the Aquino government largely stems from its role in the overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and its continuing liberal pretensions after having instituted only limited reforms. But in fact, widespread, ruthless and systematic fascist violence goes hand in hand with this liberal posturing, which makes of the limited reforms of the US-Aquino regime as sheer embellishment for state fascism.

The Aquino government soon exposed its real nature as a puppet of US imperialism and as the main instrument of reaction and counterrevolution in the country. It bowed docilely to US imperialist demands to keep the national economy under tight imperialist control and prolong its military hold here. It soon took the lead, at the behest of imperialism and fascists in and out of the reactionary and armed forces, in pursuing intensified assaults on the revolutionary movement of the people.

The 60-day ceasefire and the peace talks that the Aquino government entered into with the National Democratic Front only served to further expose the reactionary and counterrevolutionary character of the former. It made known its sinister design to have the revolutionary forces capitulate to its unjust rule rather than address the fundamental problems that are at the root of the people's armed struggle. And it showed bad faith by distorting and circumventing the arrangements it had signed with the NDF.

More recently, the US-Aquino regime has formalized its declaration of "total war" upon the national-democratic revolutionary movement. This is in accordance with the concept of "low intensity conflict" prescribed by US imperialism, which emphasizes maximum use of the counterrevolutionary dual tactics of all-out fascist violence and terrorism and "psychological warfare", which is another term for deception.

Vigorously, abetted by US imperialism, the counterrevolutionary war unleashed by the Aquino government is characterized by heightened military operations by the death squads, matching, if not even surpassing at times, the fascist atrocities of its predecessor. It has steadily repressed the democratic rights of the people, especially the masses of workers and peasants against whom ruthless massacres were perpetrated one after another.

As an essential component also of its "total war" against the revolutionary movement and with the active connivance of the conservative Church hierarchy and big business sectors the US-Aquino regime is vigorously waging systematic campaigns of deception to propagate reformism among the people and to viciously attack the revolutionary forces through the use of formal democratic rights, electoral processes, limited socioeconomic projects and rabid anticommunist propaganda. It also attempts to weaken and disarm the revolutionary forces by dangling its schemes of "amnesty" and "rehabilitation".

REVOLUTIONARY FORCES KEEP ON ADVANCING

The Party, the people's army and the rest of the national democratic revolutionary movement have been able not only to maintain but even expand their armed and organized strength in the face of the new regime's counterrevolutionary political and military offensive.

Holding firmly to the general line of the people's democratic revolution, the revolutionary forces

have given principal attention to consolidating themselves ideologically, politically and organizationally and to rallying the people against the new reactionary rulers now hiding behind a liberal mask.

Revolutionary guerilla fronts cover more provinces, towns and barrios, embracing large areas of the countrysides and extending to parts of the urban centers. In the midst of these wide fronts are the more consolidated guerilla bases which have increased both in number and scope. More democratic organs of political power are being established at the barrio and town level in the course of implementing revolutionary agrarian reform and of building up the main and local guerilla units, partisan units, people's militias, the mass organizations and Party committees and units.

The New People's Army in particular has borne up very well despite the intensified armed and political pressures from the enemy. Its company formations are generally intact, and more are being formed in the various regions. The gallantry, dedication and skills of the NPA cadres and Red fighters have been proven time and again in many a tactical offensive. Improving on tactics and logistics, they continue to inflict more enemy losses in troops, arms and equipment. The year 1986 saw the armed struggle rapidly developing in Luzon and parts of the Visayas compared to the big leaps of the previous years in Mindanao, Samar and Negros, thus evening up at a certain level the spread and intensity of guerilla warfare throughout the archipelago.

The revolutionary mass movements have steadily expanded and developed in the cities and countrysides. Taking to the forefront of the people's militant struggles are the masses of workers and peasants, By raising both economic and political demands, their own basic class demands as well as those of the entire people in a most consistently militant manner, the worker and peasant mass movements have shown the pressing need to. pursue and intensify the struggle for fundamental changes in society.

There has been a dramatic rise in scope and intensity of the strike movement and political struggles of the working class. A high point in this development was the gigantic protest against the Olalia murder. By providing effective leadership of the workers' struggles, the Party has succeeded in expanding rapidly, and in great measure, the revolutionary forces among the worker masses and putting them in a position of effective dominance over the trade union movement.

Significant gains have likewise been achieved by the peasant mass movement through the many and varied mass struggles which are closely linked with the armed struggle and waged at both the local and national levels. The most recent national peasant mass campaign has brought about a heightened popular consciousness in support of the peasant demand for land especially when it was met by the US-Aquino regime with brute force at Mendiola, an event now known as the newest of the Mendiola massacres.

Urban poor struggles have also grown and developed. especially in Metro Manila. Urban poor contingents have joined those of the workers, peasants and youth in protesting continued fascist atrocities and in demanding for basic changes in society.

Revolutionary and progressive organizations among the students and the community youth have generally maintained their organized forces and mass influence as well as those among the various sectors of the middle forces like the teachers, health workers and professionals, cultural workers, church people, scientists and technologists and government employees.

Regular structures of the National Democratic Front (NDF) from the barrio and town level to the regional and national levels are being set up in recognition of the rising capability – armed and political – of the revolutionary masses, the NDF's continued drawing power among the middle forces and its developing stature among revolutionary and progressive forces abroad. In due time, the NDF shall have a full blown machinery to further develop its strength and influence both in the domestic and international arena.

Of course, problems, big and small, did appear which tended to diffuse the revolutionary efforts and weaken the revolutionary forces' unity and resolve, like the proliferation of bourgeois liberal views and reformist and parliamentarist ideas among their ranks. Besides, the enemy intensified his conscious efforts to undermine and sabotage the revolutionary movement by peddling reformist lies, sowing intrigues and physically attacking revolutionaries. But the Party and the revolutionary movement which it led continued to weather these challenges, preserved their unity, charted the revolutionary direction clearly and correctly, and led the masses of the people in revolutionary struggles with steadfastness and dedication.

OUR PRESENT TASKS

The Party, the New People's Army and the rest of the national democratic revolutionary movement are called upon in the present historical period to expose and isolate the US-Aquino regime; defeat the regime's "total war" and vigorously advance the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist struggles; strengthen the armed and organized forces of the broadest united front of revolutionary and progressive forces; and step up solidarity efforts with revolutionary: and progressive forces overseas.

As before, the revolutionary armed struggle remains the Filipino people's main weapon for attaining national freedom and democracy over the forces of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Now more than ever, it is crystal-clear that without the people's army, it would be impossible for the revolutionary people to preserve their revolutionary gains from the past almost two decades of revolutionary struggles and to advance in their task of winning national and social liberation.

To further spread and intensify the armed struggle and bring it to a new and higher level -- this is our main task at present. It is a task which requires more than anything else the mobilization of the masses of our people for armed struggle, with the people's army serving as the spearhead.

We must continue to consolidate and expand our guerilla fronts and zones and hasten the development of more guerilla bases, thus weakening further enemy hold on, and strengthening revolutionary power in ever-widening areas of the country. By vigorously waging revolutionary struggles, implementing step by step and in an all-round manner the revolutionary land reform program, building up and strengthening the various units of the people's army, the mass organizations and the Party committees and units, we continuously raise the level of democratic political power which at present finds expression in the people's revolutionary committees being set up in consolidated areas at the barrio and municipal levels and in the network of NDF committees in less consolidated areas of the countryside and in the urban centers.

We must further strengthen the people's army ideologically, politically and organizationally. Let us exceed our past performance at strengthening the Party's ideological. and political leadership in the people's army. We must exert every effort to develop more military cadres. We must set up Party branches at the company level and Party groups at the platoon level and ensure that they take the lead in ideological and political studies, mass work, the conduct of criticism and self-criticism, improving discipline, ensuring the exercise of democracy within, and boosting the fighting morale and improving the fighting capability of the Red fighters and commanders. The Party must see to it that the system of political officers is well in place and consistently developed within the structure of command of the New People's Army.

We must continue our efforts at establishing more regular units – company and platoon-level formations – local guerilla units as well as partisan units and effectively combine them in wiping out more and bigger enemy troops and conducting more harassments and sabotage as we spread the guerilla warfare in all areas – in the countrysides and the urban areas, in the plains as in the shorelines and even in the seas.

Relative to the stepped, up development of company formations, we must pay special attention to staff development, to raising our level of tactics and techniques, and to meeting the increasing logistical requirements of our expanding armed forces. With bigger enemy forces assaulting our guerilla fronts and guerilla bases, we need to master the tactics of concentration, dispersal and shifting of our formations as the need requires, raise the level of coordination in our tactical offensives and campaigns, and improve intelligence work.

Alongside the development of the people's army, we must also raise the level of participation of the broad masses of the people in the armed struggle. We must be able to expand, train and develop more militia units inside the guerilla fronts and zones and more self-defense units in the localities and workplaces in the urban areas. These units of the armed people must be capable not only of protecting the organized forces of the revolution as well as the masses but of complementing the efforts of the regular and local guerilla units of the people's army in launching tactical military offensives and various types of harassment and sabotage.

We must make use of the proper and effective combination of military operations and mass struggles, especially those of the peasant and worker masses. By doing so, the revolutionary initiatives of the masses are widened and. enhanced in delivering more telling military and political blows on the enemy. This assumes particular importance in the light of the "total war" being launched by the US-Aquino regime against the revolutionary forces.

More than ever before, we must intensify our political work among the officers and men of the reactionary Armed Forces of the Philippines bearing in mind that most of them come from the ranks off the exploited and oppressed classes. At the same time, we must never let down our guard against the continuing schemes of the enemy to infiltrate our ranks and make trouble from within.

And even as we intensify our efforts to solicit political and material support from comrades and friends overseas, while extending, to them help that is within our means, we must never forget that we are basically a self-reliant movement, deriving our strength from our own people.

Over the next few years, the US-Aquino regime and the reactionary ruling classes which it represents and serves will try might and main to crush the revolution and impose their will on the Filipino

people with even greater impunity. But the rapid worsening of the crisis in which it is enmeshed will overtake this regime and weaken it in a big way. The revolutionary forces are also in a much better position today than before to expand and develop its armed and political strength while engaging the enemy in all-sided, complicated and difficult struggles, to intensify and bring to a new and higher level the armed and entire revolutionary struggles of the people.

Carry forward the people's democratic revolution against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism!

Expose, oppose and isolate the US-Aquino regime and defeat its counterrevolutionary war!

Vigorously advance the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist struggles and achieve a major leap in the people's war in the coming years!

Long live the New People's Army!

Long live the entire national-democratic revolutionary movement!

Central Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines March 29, 1987